

ROTARY ACTION GROUP AGAINST SLAVERY

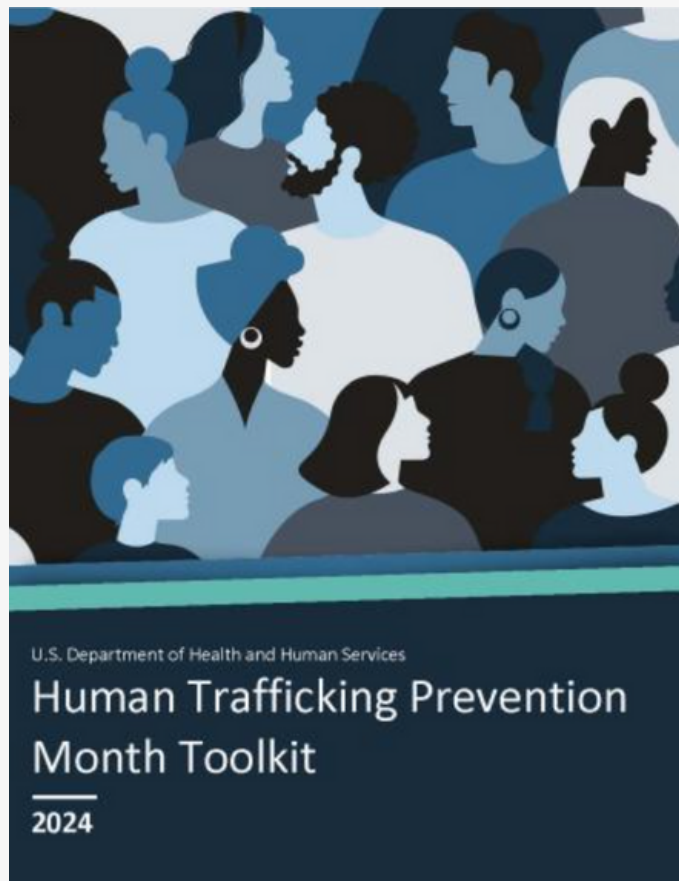
# RAGAS NEWSLETTER

<https://ragas.online/>

This Rotary Action Group is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.

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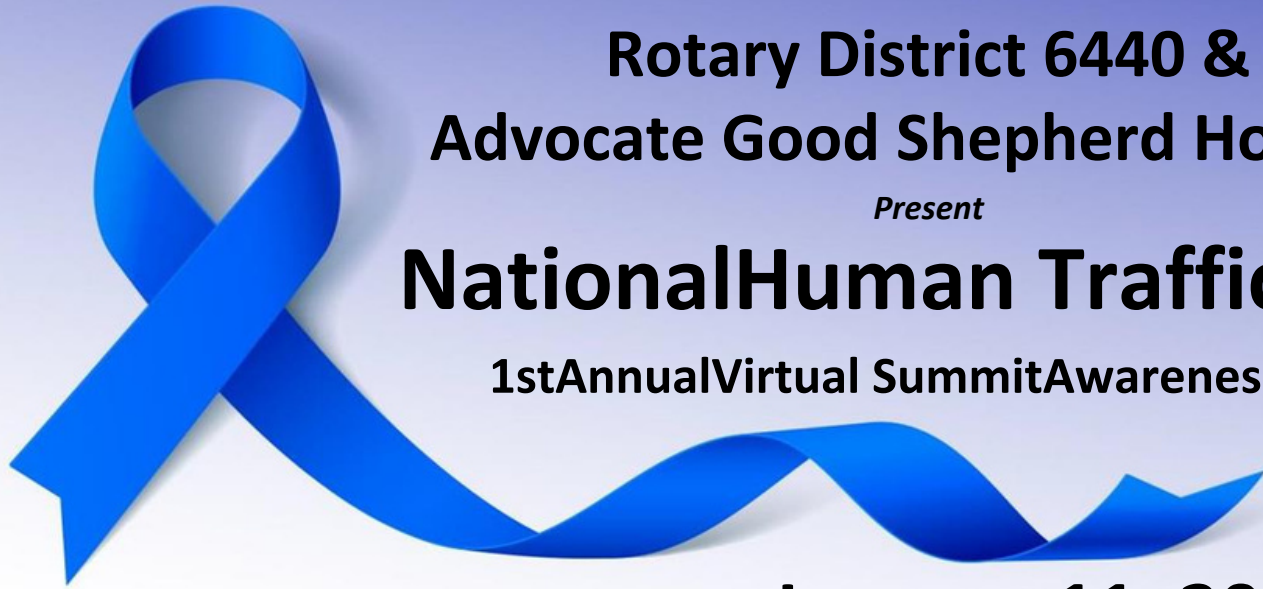
## HAPPY NEW YEAR CREATING HOPE IN THE WORLD



National Human Trafficking Prevention Month Toolkit. January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a presidentially designated observance aimed at educating the public about human trafficking and the role they can play in prevention and response.

The Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) toolkit for National Human Trafficking Prevention Month 2024 focuses on activating partnerships to prevent and respond to human trafficking. The toolkit includes sample social media posts, graphics, newsletter and website copy, and resources. Tap [here](#) to view this toolkit.

JANUARY IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



## Rotary District 6440 & Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital

*Present*

# National Human Trafficking 1st Annual Virtual Summit Awareness Day

## January 11, 2024

8:00 am – 3:00 pm

### You Can Register

#### 3 Different Ways!

[click on this link](#)

or

<https://tinyurl.com/traffickingjan11>

or



**Questions:** Contact—

Suzanne Martinez, Lake Zurich Rotary  
[smartinezsam@aol.com](mailto:smartinezsam@aol.com) · 847-565-9278 mobile

**National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11, 2024**, brings to the forefront the persistent issue of human trafficking. The entire month of January is recognized as **National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month**.

Rotary District 6440, in partnership with Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital, is dedicating this day to bring awareness and prevention of this illegal practice.

**Human trafficking (HT) is a critical humanitarian crisis we face today**, second only to drug trafficking.

Anyone can become a victim. They can come from any socioeconomic status, any age, any race, male or female, young or old.

You have an opportunity to take action to aid this vulnerable population. **You may be able to save a life!**

### Learn about:

- What is Human Trafficking & Who is at Risk?
- Who are the Victims? Survivor Stories
- Prevalence of Human Trafficking in Illinois
- Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital: Taking Action
- Advocacy: Human Trafficking Organizations
- Local Law and Federal Investigation Process
- Criminal Prosecution
- Rotary: Taking Action
- Prevention, Education, & a Call to Action

## HELP WANTED! SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO RESEARCH GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING LAWS!



# Global Compendium— Human Trafficking Laws

The Rotary Action Group is an active participant in the Global Compendium Pro Bono Anti-Trafficking Project. The Compendium is intended to contain the key human trafficking and modern slavery laws of each country. Each country chapter is prepared using a standard template format and addresses the human trafficking laws in a standardized manner. That standardization not only allows for ease of use of the information contained in the Compendium but also allows users to easily compare laws from one country to another, especially for those seeking best practice models. The country chapters are available to the public at no cost via the RAGAS website at: <https://ragas.online/human-trafficking-laws/>.

Research for the country chapters and drafts of the chapters are prepared by volunteers. **The project is in need of volunteers to conduct research or prepare country chapter drafts for numerous countries.**

**Two training sessions will be held on January 16, 2024** (at 9:00 am Eastern Time and at 9:00 pm (21:00) Eastern Time). Volunteers will receive the chapter template and a research guide that will be explained during the training sessions. The human trafficking laws of many countries can be found through free internet resources in English. A number of companies and the law firm of Jones Day already have contributed and are contributing to the Global Compendium project.

**To receive the calendar invite** with the MS Teams link and related tools, **please email Annamarie Daley** at [adaley@jonesday.com](mailto:adaley@jonesday.com) and let her know which session you would like to attend on **January 16th 9AM or 9PM EST.**

## MY FREEDOM DAY



My name is Leif Coorlim and I am the executive editor of the Freedom Project on CNN International. We are so excited to partner with the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery For "My Freedom Day" March 14th, 2024, we will be holding our 8th annual #MyFreedomDay.

**#MyFreedomDay** is an opportunity for schools around the world to show their support on behalf of the 10 million boys and girls trapped in modern day slavery. We encourage all people to participate in a day of action to support those working to free them.

The focus of the upcoming campaign is on forced child labor, and the children who do not have the opportunity to go to school. **Our campaign is called "Little Hands," and we will be documenting stories of child labor and showing the hands of the children who toil in the mines, fields and factories around the world.**

To show their solidarity and aversion to this form of slavery, we're encouraging classrooms in every country to post pictures of their students' hands to social media.

Your school has been selected to be among the first to represent Zimbabwe.

If you're interested, please fill out this short form to receive updates on the campaign. <https://forms.gle/tni3mqbwXiUvLZFr5>. The first school in each country to fill out the form will be counted. **Participation is free and entirely voluntary. Social media submissions using the hashtags #LittleHands and #MyFreedomDay must be posted by March 1st, to be included on a CNN program.**

CNN Interview Dave McCleary - RAGAS Chair Emeritus

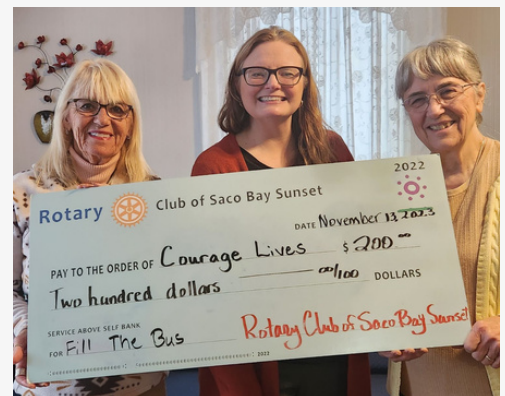
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## FIVE ORGANIZATIONS COLLABORATED TO “FILL THE BUS” FOR DONATIONS FOR HUMAN SEX TRAFFICKED SURVIVORS AND FAMILIES.

The Rotary Club of Saco Bay Sunset in Old Orchard Beach, ME USA collaborated with Courage Lives, Old Orchard Beach Social Services Navigator, Old Orchard Beach Rec Department, Old Orchard Beach High School Interact and Esther Residence to "Fill the Bus" with clothing, hygienic products, food, blankets and other items to donate to Human Sex Trafficked survivors and families. This is the second project that the Rotary Club of Saco Bay Sunset has undertaken. Last year they work with Courage Lives. Courage Lives is an organization that provides services that focus on caring, healing and rebuilding of human sex trafficked survivors and their families. Some of the services are: individual mentoring and individual and growth mental health counseling services.

Esther Residence is a home and transitional program for women who are leaving incarceration and/or treatment program. Some of these women have been trafficked. Esther Residence is run by the Sisters of Good Shepherd. Their mission is to provide guidance in a safe and nurturing environment to women desiring to make positive life changes. The Old Orchard Beach Interact students volunteered on November 11, 2023 to help fill the bus. The Rotary Club of Saco Bay Sunset also collaborated with the Old Orchard Beach's Social Services Navigator. Olivia Dubois. Olivia provides support to residents and those in need by providing social services, food, clothing and much needed items.

The Old Orchard Beach Recreation Department provided support for the Fill the Bus event my loaning their bus for the day. Townsfolks brought donated items all through the day. It was on voting day and fi they did not know about the Fill the Bus event; some would go home to get items to donate or go to the store to purchase items. The collected items will also go to local/needy families in town. The bus was filled from top to bottom and front to back! Old Orchard Beach residents were generous in their donations! There was \$200 raised as well.  
Submitted By: Carolyn Marcotte



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN DAY SLAVERY IN IN TURKEY AND GREECE

Submitted by Dr. George Belitsos RAGAS Board member

This Fall, I was fortunate to spend 3 weeks in Eastern Europe. I have relatives and friends in both Turkey (the spelling has been changed by government decree to Türkiye) and Greece.

Whenever I travel overseas, I try to learn about human trafficking and modern slavery by talking to anti-trafficking advocates and visiting NGOs that serve victims and survivors. I was fortunate to be handed an October 2023 report titled “**Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking of Forcibly Displaced Persons in Greece and Türkiye**”, a collaboration between STOP THE TRAFFIK Group, Fenix Aid, and Exploitation Analytics.

**You can find the full report [here](#).**

The report sheds light on the legal framework for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking and the obstacles they face in accessing protection in Greece and Türkiye, with a particular focus on survivors who are asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

**The report outlines several key protection obstacles:**

- **Border Tensions:** The strained relationship between Greece and Türkiye has hindered cooperation in preventing, identifying, and disrupting human trafficking, leaving survivors vulnerable.
- **Response Challenges:** Both countries struggle to address the growing number of individuals seeking protection. This includes challenges related to providing accommodation, access to public services, financial support, and legal status.
- Please see the article in the November RAGAS newsletter entitled, “Greek Boat Tragedy Places Spotlight on Human Trafficking”.
- **Legal Framework Limitations:** Despite some improvements, existing legal frameworks and mechanisms still fall short of adequately protecting survivors.

**Consequently, the report provides a set of recommendations to stakeholders, aiming to enhance survivors' access to their rights.**

It is crucial to highlight the efforts, including early identification, the training of officials who interact directly with survivors or individuals at risk, and ensuring that these individuals have access to their rights. This encompasses essential elements like adequate medical care, housing, and inclusion measures, all of which are vital in securing the protection of modern slavery and human trafficking (MS/HT) survivors.

HT/MS is a growing global heinous crime and it is important for Rotarians to become aware of not only what is happening in your own country but also around the world.

## ROTARY CLUB OF FRONT ROYAL'S LUNCH MEETING

Board member and Virginia RAGAS Coordinator, Amelia Stansell, presented at the Rotary Club of Front Royal's lunch meeting and was joined by two D7570 RYLA alumni from Randolph Macon Academy who heard about RAGAS at RYLA last December and helped raise awareness at their school when they returned. RMA has invited Stansell, the Virginia State Police and Front Royal Police detectives to present at a student assembly in early December. Photographed are: (L-R) RAGAS Board Member, Amelia Stansell; President Ken Evans; Habeeba Sesay, a senior at RMA, and Elena Leasure, a junior at RMA.



## ROTARIAN'S "WALK FOR FREEDOM" TO ABOLISH MODERN SLAVERY

Written by Dr. George Belitsos (RAGAS Board member)

A combined effort of two Rotary Districts (Iowa 6000 & Illinois 6420) resulted in a Quad Cities "Walk for Freedom" which took place on October 14th. Most participants wore black and walked single-file across the bridge between Iowa and Illinois. These Rotarians braved a cold and windy Saturday morning to call attention to the growing scourge of human trafficking. The signs called on everyone to help to abolish human trafficking and modern slavery. Many drivers on the bridge honked their horns in support of Rotary's fight to end human trafficking.

Two of the leaders in the walk (shown in the photo) are members of the Iowa District 6000 Prevent Human Trafficking Action Team. Maggie Tinsman and Deanna Jensen demonstrated their commitment as modern-day abolitionists. This Action Team is made up of representatives of 18 District 6000 Rotary clubs. The Action Team got its start two years ago as a result of District 6000 receiving one of the first RAGAS \$1,000 Community Awareness and Prevention Education (CAPE) grants. The \$1,000 RAGAS grant was matched by \$2,500 in District 6000 funds.

As District 6000 Rotarians entered the world of human trafficking and explored what they could do together to end this global crime, RAGAS has seen how District 6000 Rotarians have taken up this urgent cause and become present-day abolitionists. The CAPE grant incentivized District 6000 and the Action Team to commit "boots on the ground" Rotarians to work to educate/prevent the heinous crime of human trafficking.

Some of the club CAPE community projects have focused on arming and protecting school-age youth from all forms of trafficking and exploitation. All 18 Rotary clubs partnered with local nonprofits, faith communities, and schools to initiate community P/E programs.

All projects have distributed hotline stickers with 888-3737-888 national hotline so people can report suspected trafficking, and for victims to ask for help. Between the 18 Action Team Rotary clubs and a partner organization, the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking over 15,000 hotline stickers have been posted statewide.

During the month of October each year, A21 (an international anti-trafficking nonprofit) organizes walks for freedom across the world. This year, 425 communities across over 50 countries reached nearly 800 million people through media and awareness of human trafficking. Here is a link to a video that recaps the marches and tells you how your Rotary Club can organize a "Freedom Walk" next year: [Walk for Freedom 2023 Recap](#).



## THE MEKONG CLUB RASING AWARENESS ABOUT SCAMS ALL ACROSS ASIA

RAGAS just received the below email from Matt Friedman from The Mekong Club. Matt is a former board director of RAGAS and a great advocate of ending human slavery/human trafficking around the globe. We feel that our membership needs the knowledge of his efforts so we are sharing his email:

“With this email, we are announcing the launch of our crowdfunding campaign, and we invite you to be a part of our mission to prevent human trafficking through awareness and education.

The urgency of this campaign cannot be overstated. A year and a half ago, a horrifying new crime was discovered in two Southeast Asian countries – human trafficking into scam centers. The problem grew and took on a more global scale as time passed. Today, various networks run criminal operations, making it increasingly difficult for governments, law enforcement, and nonprofits to combat this issue.

The victims of these scams often include well-educated professionals and students seeking overseas job opportunities from across Asia and beyond. These individuals find themselves ensnared by the lure of fake job offers, only to be subjected to unthinkable forms of mistreatment. It's a pressing issue that requires immediate attention.

Our mission is clear: to create a powerful short film that educates overseas job seekers about the risks associated with fake job offers, raises awareness about human trafficking, and helps protect the vulnerable.”

If you have an interest in learning more about this project contact The Mekong Club directly at [matt.friedman@themekongclub.org](mailto:matt.friedman@themekongclub.org). or visit the website <https://themekongclub.org/>



## ENDING FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING

The EFOH (Ending Forced Organ Harvesting) Rotary Satellite Club of CAAHT (Community Action Against Human Trafficking) was established on August 15, 2022. Its mission is to engage Rotarians and their communities to help eradicate the trafficking of vulnerable populations for their organs (known as Forced Organ Harvesting or FOH) and prevent people worldwide from becoming unknowing accomplices to this crime. China is the leading hub for organ trafficking and transplant tourism, but China lacks a mature and reliable organ donation system. Organs are predominantly obtained from prisoners of conscience, such as Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Tibetans, House Christians, and others. Organs are forcefully extracted without consent whenever a demand arises, often leading to the victim's death on the operating table.

### How the club was formed:

In 2022, with the proactive support of RAGAS Chair Dave McCleary and Director Amelia Stansell, Texas-based Rotarian Shirley Hu recruited a group of four volunteers to help distribute flyers raising awareness of Forced Organ Harvesting at the RAGAS booth during the Rotary International Convention in Houston. All these volunteers became the founding members of EFOH Rotary Satellite Club of CAAHT two months after the event!



Please access the [link](#) to see the full story.

## ENDING FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING

### **Why the club continues to fight against Modern Slavery:**

Modern Slavery is a crime against humanity. Forced Organ Harvesting is another form of Modern Slavery and “Medical Genocide.”

These crimes have been happening for decades and are still ongoing. Countless innocent people have been persecuted and even killed due to these crimes. We need to be a voice for those who don’t have one. We are proud to be Rotarians who create hope for the world!

### **What keeps the members motivated:**

#### **1. “Ien Testimony”**

I have tried to bring awareness about the persecution of the Falun Gong practitioners after learning about the atrocities of this crime against humanity. As a constituent from Arkansas, I spoke with the legislative aides, the U.S. Representatives, and the U.S. Senators from Arkansas about the persecution. After attending the 2022 Rotary International convention, I received an invitation from Shirley to attend an exploratory meeting of forming a cause-based e-club. I was moved by the enthusiastic encouragement from so many Rotarians to form this e-club. As the old saying goes, nothing in this world happens by mistake. Being a U.S. citizen living in a free country gave me appreciation for the lifestyle I live, being a Falun Gong practitioner gave me empathy for the forced organ harvesting victims, and being a Past President of the Sherwood Rotary Club gave me the leadership experience needed to form this satellite club. Within 45 days, the Rotary Satellite Club of Ending Forced Organ Harvesting was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking and was approved by Rotary International. Within 12 months, our membership grew from ten (10) members and two (2) advisors to sixteen (16) members and two (2) honorary members. Our voices touched the hearts of many at the global scale—our members are from Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the United States.



## ENDING FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING

### 2. “Juia’s Testimony”

I first learned about forced organ harvesting from a newspaper article in 2006, and I couldn't believe what I was reading. As more news reports emerged, providing numerous details, I became convinced that this horrifying practice was indeed a reality. The reports described the brutal killing of Falun Gong practitioners as if they were animals, and their organs were being sold for profit. This struck a deeply personal chord with me because I also practice Falun Gong, and if I were in China at the time, I could be slaughtered too. For a period, I found myself in tears every day, unable to comprehend the magnitude of this tragedy. Driven by a sense of responsibility, I started sharing this information with everyone I knew. However, one person's effort is limited. That is why I chose to join RSC of EFOH, a group with like-minded people. Together we can make a greater impact and increase public awareness of this atrocity.



### 3. “Wen Testimony”

Before joining RSC-EFOH, I already visited hundreds of Rotary clubs as a public speaker for Chinese culture and society. Rotarians demonstrated the best parts of Western civilization: honesty, politeness, and generosity. I was born and raised in China, so these qualities are what we lacked under communist education. I highly admire Rotarians' dedication to community service and always wanted to be part of it. It was perfect timing when Shirley, the current advisor of RSC-EFOH, told me about this club. I am a human rights activist through Amnesty International. RSC-EFOH allows me to bring my expertise and also learn from many other Rotarians worldwide. It is amazing how we can form such a diverse team with people from all over the world to achieve the same goal.



## ENDING FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING

### 4. "Jimmy Testimony"

Since the exposure of the Chinese Communist Party's forced organ harvesting from living individuals in 2006, I have been speaking about this issue to the public and government officials at all levels.

Seventeen years have passed, and I have spoken to possibly tens of thousands of people. I know that many other volunteers are also doing similar work across the United States and in many other countries. However, I have found that the majority of people I encounter are still unaware of this issue. I believe we need to create more channels to raise awareness about this matter.

Rotary International is an international organization, and its mission is to make positive and meaningful contributions to communities and humanity. I believe that spreading awareness about forced organ harvesting within the Rotary community is also very meaningful. That's why I became a member of this satellite Rotary club.

### Projects:

Our projects involve presentations, documentary screenings, and distribution of medical research reports and publications about Forced Organ Harvesting to local Rotary clubs, universities, and communities to help raise public awareness of this crime against humanity.

With the grant offered by Rotary District 5710 and proactive support from its sponsoring club CAAHT, the Satellite club members from various states successfully completed three film screening events in Kansas, Delaware, and California by end of June 2023. Attendees included 80+ people from local communities and Rotary clubs as well as professors and college students. See the full report at this [link](#). The club is planning to have three more documentary screening events in New Jersey, Delaware, and Melbourne before end of next June.

Submitted By: Shirly Hsia



The Rotaract Club at the University of Delaware hosted a film screening of the documentary "Medical Genocide" at Trabant Theater on campus on April 26, 2023. Three club members from left: Monica Elavarthi, Chandana Elavarthi, and Emily Lewie. (Nancy Wang/The Epoch Times)



## RAGAS SOCIAL MEDIA

RAGAS communication

You can receive the information by following us on social media!

- [RAGAS Facebook](#)
- [RAGAS LinkedIn](#)
- [RAGAS Twitter](#)
- [RAGAS Instagram](#)
- [RAGAS YouTube](#)

## TAKE ACTION

We are not defined by who we are, but by our actions. To contribute to ending modern slavery, you can:

- Become a RAGAS member from [here](#).
- Donate to RAGAS, or organisations working on ending modern slavery.
- [Contact your local Coordinator](#) to volunteer for RAGAS.
- Invite a RAGAS speaker to your local club meeting to talk about modern slavery.
- Initiate a Global Grant project to fight against modern slavery.

Engage with Rotary District and clubs that are dedicated to ending modern slavery, including:

- District 5950 [Rotary eClub to End Human Trafficking](#),
- District 5710 [Rotary eClub of Community Action Against Human Trafficking](#),
- District 5280 [Rotarians Fighting Human Trafficking](#)
- District 5810 [Rotary Satellite Club of Greenville to End Human Trafficking](#)
- District 1260 [Ware Rotary Satellite Club Rotary for Slave Free Communities](#)
- District 5030 [The Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking](#)
- District 5840 [To Combat Human Trafficking](#)
- District 5710 [Ending Forced Organ Harvesting RSC of CAAHT](#)
- District 6000 [Prevent Human Trafficking Action Team](#)

**LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT?**  
帮助您找方法 ¿ESTÁS BUSCANDO UNA SALIDA? ¿NECESITAS AYUDA?  
**STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  
NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE  
**888-3737-888**  
or Text "Help" to 233733 (BeFree)  
IOWA VICTIM SERVICE CALL CENTER  
**800-770-1650**  
IT HAPPENS HERE IN IOWA or Text "iowaht" to 20121  
Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking & Slavery  
www.iowanaht.org  
Rotary

This is a sticker created by the Rotary District 6000 Prevent Human Trafficking Action Team. For more information or questions, contact RAGAS Board member Dr. George Belitsos at [gbelitsos55@gmail.com](mailto:gbelitsos55@gmail.com)